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ABSTRACT

The implementation of an administrative on-line data-base system for the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) is explained in this report. The report begins by describing the SDCCD environment, a multi-campus district under the direction of a chancellor and a cabinet. District headcount in Fall, 1981 consisted of over 100,000 students and between 5,000 and 6,000 staff members. After explaining the governance and duties of the district's computing services department, which is operated under contract by an outside company, the report lists past and anticipated computing achievements at SDCCD, including the development of payroll systems, a master catalog and class schedule, and a budget preparation system. Finally, the report outlines five factors contributing to the success of these systems: (1) top-level agreement on the need for these systems; (2) early determination by key users of general district requirements for the new systems; (3) rapid installation of baseline systems on the SDCCD computer as a means of establishing credibility with user departments; (4) formation of a User Task Force to serve as a focal point for decision making, planning, and training and to act as a communication channel to users; and (5) designation of a liaison responsible for user satisfaction and for working with the task force to define and guide the project. (KL)

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PEOPLE & CHANGE

SUCCESS IN IMPLEMENTING ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

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SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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PEOPLE & CHANGE

Success in Implementing Administrative Systems

- Summary -

The key to success in implementing administrative systems in higher education (and probably any place else) is dealing effectively with people in relation to change. It is a real challenge to convince people in user departments to analyze and articulate their real requirements, to cooperate in choosing an alternative solution, and to change their way of doing their job, all while they also must continue doing day-to-day business as usual. We believe that we have accomplished this at the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD), implementing successfully three major new systems over the last two years with another in process at this time.

The following represent the key elements in these successful efforts:

1. Top-Level Support
2. General Requirements Definition
3. Prototype (Baseline) System
4. User Task Force
5. User Liaision

- The SDCCD Environment -

The SDCCD is a large, multi-campus district with a total budget approaching $100 million. The District consists of five major academic units:

- o Three two-year colleges:
  - oo City College
  - oo Mesa College
  - oo Miramar College
- o Two adult education divisions:
  - oo Educational & Cultural Complex (ECC)
  - oo Adult Education Division

The District's total student enrollment exceeded 100,000 students in the fall term of 1981, about half being college students and the other half being adult education students. The District employs a total of 5 to 6 thousand people.

The District's central administration is lead by a Chancellor with a cabinet consisting of Directors, representing each of the various functional operations, e.g., Student Services, Business Services, etc., and the Presidents of the academic units. Computing Services reports to the Director of Administrative Services, who is a member of the Chancellor's Cabinet. Computing Services is staffed and managed under contract with Systems & Computer Technology Corporation.

Computing Services supports both administrative systems and academic computing with advice from a governance structure consisting of a Computer Policy Committee, and Administrative Systems Advisory Committee, and an

Academic Computing Advisory Committee. Computing Services has a staff of 27 people operating a Univac 90/80 central computer with a District-wide telecommunications network of over 120 terminals. The budget for Computing Services is approximately $1.6 million.

The following indicates the significant computing events over the past few years, and projected into 1982:

7/01/79	Implemented the batch IAI Payroll/Personnel System.
9/01/79	Entered into a Facilities Management Contract with SCT.
4/01/80	Implemented on-line capabilities in Payroll/Personnel.
9/01/80	Began implementation of SCT's on-line, data base ISIS with the Master Catalog and Class Scheulde.
9/01/80	Installed a major hardware upgrade.
12/01/80	Registered students on-line.
1/01/81	Implemented SCT's Fund Accounting System (FAS).
4/01/81	Completed implementation of ISIS.
7/01/81	Completed implementation of FAS.
2/01/82	Implement SCT's on-line, data base Budget Preparation System.
6/01/82	Implement SCT's ISIS for Adult Education.

- The Keys To Success -

There are many reasons for this success in implementing systems. However, we believe that the key is in dealing effectively with people in relation to change. The following are some of the important aspects of this whole systems implementation process:

1. Top-Level Support - There was a concensus of Board members and top administrators that new systems must be implemented to meet the operational and management needs of the 80's. This translated into the allocation of all the needed resources, people's time, political clout, and dollars. There was also a great deal of interest and involvement in these projects at all levels. This attention enhanced the prospects of success. In addition, there was a realistic understanding of the commitments required and a willingness to take the time to make intelligent decisions.
2. General Requirements Definition - Agreement was reached early in the process on the general requirements in the various areas at a general level. This allowed the examination of alternative approaches and the selection of one at an early point in time. The District decided to acquire professional assistance in this process and to adopt the approach of seeking out and installing a "base-line" system which would meet the highest percentage of the District requirements It was decided that only mandatory changes would be made initially and all other changes made after the system was in operation. There was dedicated involvement by the key users who were willing to work hard to achieve concensus on these general requirements.

3. Baseline System - The selected baseline system in each case was than quickly installed 'as is' on the District's computer. This allowed the definition of detailed requirements by use of this baseline system. This established credibility with users and facilitated the detailed specifications process. This part of the process was greatly facilitated by user-oriented and service-oriented Computing Services and Contractor staff. The fact that the baseline system was working someplace else made the new system less abstract which gave the users confidence that it would also work here. The users could see that progress was being made and that the probability of success was good.

4. User Task Force - A Task Force of users with a user as Chairperson was established at the initiation of each project. This group became a part of the process, the focal point for decision-making, planning and training and a communications channel to all end users (which in our case numbered in the hundreds). The selection of these users was carefully and thoughtfully carried out by the top administration. A commitment of up to 60% of an individual's time for months was understood and accepted by the individual and his superior. The importance of the Task Force work was stressed and clear guidelines were given, e.g., only mandatory changes, the training and communications channel responsibility, etc. Finally, I believe these people believed in what they were doing and had a lot of fun doing it.

5. User Liaison - A function was established, and a person named, in Computing Services with the responsibility for user satisfaction. This person served as staff to the Task Force during the definition stage, and continued to guide the process through implementation and actual operation of the system. The person in this position must have a strong people orientation with solid subject matter knowledge, and be able to communicate effectively with both users and data processors. The need for, and the credibility of this function cannot be over-emphasized. Computing Services must be perceived by the users to be service oriented and knowledgeable and emphathetic with user problems. This spirit is what really made it happen.

We started this process with cynical and incredulous user department staff who were utilizing ineffective and inefficient first generation data processing systems. We received top-level support for a process involving installation quickly of proven software which most closely met our requirements. We established a structure of user involvement and an attitude that the computing function was there to serve the users. We restricted initial modifications to only mandatory ones and had the new systems as operational as possible. We are now pleased that these same users are proud owners and operators of effective and efficient on-line, data base fourth generation systems.

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